

# Early Literacy as Library Culture

Texas State Library and Archives Commission Webinar

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Lewisville Public Library

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## What is early literacy?

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read or write.

Early literacy skills are “pre-reading” skills.

Early literacy factors into all of our early childhood and family programs:

- Weekly early literacy storytimes for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers
- Monthly outreach storytimes at area childcare centers
- Monthly family programs such as LegoMania, Family Craft Day, etc.
- Early literacy trainings for caregivers (parents, childcare providers, etc.)
- Summer Reading Club
- And more!

## Tip 1: Take small steps.

*Do small things with consistency to avoid feeling stressed out or short of time by adding big projects on top of an already full plate.*

Taking small steps is not only easier on you, it is easier on your customer.

Some examples of LPL’s small steps:

- Verbalizing practices we model in storytime
- Creating and providing:
  - Take-home storytime sheets with early literacy tips
  - Take-home activities (including but not limited to crafts)
  - Early literacy brochures and newsletters
- Storytime nametags
- Passive techniques such as signage and décor, interactive play area, etc.
- Improved access to early literacy information (materials available throughout children’s area)

## Tip 2: Don’t reinvent the wheel.

*Borrow from ALSC, TLA, TSLAC, and other libraries and organizations.*

- ALA / ALSC
- TLA / Texas State Library / other state libraries and associations
- Other libraries
- Relevant organizations (National Organization for the Education of Young Children, etc.)
- Professional literature

**Tip 3: Recycle.**

*Recycle, reuse, and reinforce ideas.*

- Your audience is always changing – kids “age out,” new families move in, etc.
- Repeating early literacy tips, crafts, etc. reinforces early literacy concepts
- Adapt your work for multiple audiences (for example, adapting a song from infant storytime for toddler storytime)

**Tip 4: Try, try again.**

*Evaluate and make changes as needed, and don't cling to ideas that aren't working.*

Recycle what works, trash what doesn't.

**Tip 5: Don't spend a fortune.**

*There are many free and low-cost ways to incorporate early literacy into your library culture.*

- ALSC online resources
- TexShare databases (read journal articles if you don't have subscriptions)
- Listservs & mailing lists (organizations, etc.)
- Webinars from TLA, TSLAC, *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*, etc.
- Electronic communications (e-mail, social media, etc.)
- Why hire outside entertainers when you can develop and present your own early literacy programs?

**Suggested links:**

Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC) - [www.ala.org/alsc](http://www.ala.org/alsc)

ALSC / LEGO DUPLO Initiative: The Importance of Play - [www.ala.org/alsc/importance\\_of\\_play](http://www.ala.org/alsc/importance_of_play)

Every Child Ready to Read - [everychildreadytoread.org](http://everychildreadytoread.org)

Texas Library Association - [www.txla.org](http://www.txla.org)

Texas State Library and Archives Commission - [www.tsl.state.tx.us](http://www.tsl.state.tx.us)

Colorado Libraries for Early Literacy - [www.clel.org](http://www.clel.org)

Pioneer Library System's "Growing Like a Read" Initiative - [www.justsoyouknow.us/glar](http://www.justsoyouknow.us/glar)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) - [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)